

The **ADAMS FAMILY**

ISSUE 26..... FEB/MARCH 97..... A SNIP AT 60P.....

Chairman Ivor Beeks produces proof that the £30,000 received for Matt Lawrence has gone some of the way in affording a better replacement



WYCOMBE WANDERERS FANZINE

The ADAMS FAMILY

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Hello and welcome to the twenty-sixth issue of The Adams Family, the number one Wycombe Wanderers' fanzine. Things are starting to look a bit desperate at the bottom of Division 2 however, we at TAF are all still confident that the club will stay up. We have been playing a lot better recently, the defence looks a lot more solid, we have been creating chances and in Paul Read it looks like we have finally got a striker capable of scoring twenty a season.

Today sees the return of Wanderer's Hero Keith Scott who is now playing for Watford. Let's give the man a good reception, we certainly plan to. We're going to buy a crate of Guinness and put him off scoring against us by placing cans at strategic points around the pitch.

Thanks for reading this, please keep your articles and letters coming in, they are all gratefully received.

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Further Reading: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com:80/homepages/chairboys/>
<http://www.bogo.co.uk/oscar/bodg1.htm>

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Since you've been GONE

31/12/96

Due to severe weather conditions in West London, Wycombe's new year battle is delayed when Brentford cancel early, causing player panic when the lads realise that Club Eden's renowned 'New Year Nite' is sold out. Thankfully, Keith Ryan manages to wangle some late complimentries.

3/01/97

Shares in The Adams Family fall sharply on the FTSE index as Gary Patterson buggers off to Barnet on loan. Rumours are rife in the city that should the 'housewives favourite' leave blues, Mark Austin will offer TAF Brian McGorry as his replacement in the mark your man scheme - should be fun at the shirt giving ceremony!!!

The BFP reveals that the Bradford game has been moved to Sunday to allow time for a hot air balloon cover to thaw the pitch - we really should have guessed that SKY wouldn't have wanted Bradford v Wycombe. Johnnie Willo rightly has a strop about constantly being dropped for Nil Davis (sic), the striker who knows not what his job is. Last time Johnnie threw a tantrum it started the removal of Alan Smith - so who will be forced out this time? TAF predicts someone called John! Also Dave Peters reveals that Jason Rowbotham has finally cleared off. But just what did he do? And did it involve animals?!?

5/01/97

Despite London Tonight's claims of a postponement, the balloon works. Sadly, Wycombe's strikeforce doesn't and Bradford move on to face Everton away - chairman Beeks cries himself to sleep. Johnnie Willo gets involved in more garment tossing after being subbed for the silky skills of the Faz, although of a more controlled nature than last time. Wycombe fans marvel as they discover through the programme that referee Uriah Rennie has.

'been involved in UEFA matches'. Presumably he was one of those pitch invaders when Aston Villa beat Inter Milan a couple of years back - a bit tasty like! The Take That split is eclipsed! Young ladies weep as Bob Officer announces his retirement as chairman of WWISC.

8/01/97

The world of sport goes into shock as Wanderers' much maligned midfield maestro Brian McGorry not only starts a game (Auto Windscreen mind) but scores a goal! Sadly, Brian's heroics are not matched by Desouza and (surprise surprise) Davis, who both miss penalties, leaving the Berks & Bucks cup as Wycombe's only realistic chance of a trophy.

10/01/97

The BFP reveals that Miguel was too upset to comment after his Autoglass hell - Kevin Keegan? Pressure? You haven't got a clue pal, have ya! Thankfully, Migs has the chance to boost his tally in next weeks keenly awaited B&B match against the mighty Thatcham Town!

11/01/97

Barry Fry comes waddling into town as the game against Peterborough is surprisingly on, after TV weatherman Michael Fish's traditional blizzard hype fails to materialise (young kids must hate this man, is he in league with the plastic sledge manufacturers?). Wanderers go two up and the referee abandons the game with 25 minutes to go, the decision is as mystifying as Neil Davis being quoted at only 6-1 to score the first goal! A baying mob (23 teenagers, some homeless people, TAF, and assorted persons who work for: 'A RESPECTED FRENCH OWNED COMPANY BASED IN THE AREA', await the exit of the referee, along with Alan Parry who is spotted shadow boxing in the main entrance foyer. However the ref escapes this terrifying confrontation by hiring an executive box for the night from Mark Austin, and employing office lackey Tim Arnold as a guard dog! Wycombe Star film critic and former Leader footy writer Darren Bignell, is mistaken for the ref, but escapes a pasting by revealing he is pals with Robert De Niro! Finally a heroic band of supporters cause the 'boro team coach to drive the whole way down Hillbottom

Road at m.p.h. by trying to obstruct it. Striking French lorry drivers? Pussies mate!

14/01/97

Forget Cushing and Lee, there's a late night horror double bill on Nationwide League Extra, as Wanderers fans have not only to cope with those abandoned goals and Barry Fry's incomprehensible dribbling; but also endure the sight of Alan Smith prattling around as a Spy in the Stand, assessing the likelihood of Barnsley getting promoted to the Premier. Shot in grainy black and white footage, backed by the Mission Impossible theme tune, Smudger strolled around in what can only be described as a flasher mack, promoting his availability to mad chairmen the land over. 'My name is Alan Smith ... and I achieved promotion to the Premier League with Crystal Palace'. Sadly there was no mention of his respected reign here, but the Smithster signed off with this classic quote, 'They say a team reflects its manager and they (Barnsley) certainly do'. Hmm, who was in charge when Wycombe were clueless, miserable and crap then? The B&B falls foul of the weather - Terry Skiverton and Matt Lawrence are seen weeping in a Thatcham boozier!

15/01/97

Football pretty boys such as Trevor Sinclair, Gary Speed, and Dave Carroll, are shunned by budget pullover specialists Top Man, as their new modelling contract is awarded to ex-Wanderer and household name, Stewart Castledine. Visitors to Top Man stores will see the Wimbledon reserve player in life-size posters wearing nowt but a shirt 'n' sweater combo, and a cheesy grin. Rumours of Brian Parkin announcing a similar deal with Cromwells Madhouse persist.

16/01/97

Teletext announces the arrival of Paul Read from Arsenal in a unique cash plus new hairpiece for Arsene Wenger deal. Hurrah, this should mean the departure of the Robert Rosario of division two, Neil Davis, back to Villa....

18/01/97

.... Sadly it doesn't as Mig Desouza is rewarded for his fine performance against Peterborough by being shunted onto to

the bench. Davis confirms his reputation as the unluckiest man on earth as a header hits the bar, and a 'goal' is disallowed - his reputation as the manager's favourite however, is strengthened. Wycombe continue their uncanny aptitude for capitulating in the face of bottom placed clubs.

24/01/97

John Gregory rightly slams the performance at Rotherham, and points out that people in the Capital League have been reminding him of their worth - Brian McGarry alerts his parents to the prospect of first team action. Amnesty International launch an investigation into the disappearance of John Williams. Meanwhile in Blues News, crazed cartoonist David Langdon not only pictures Steve McGavin scoring a goal, but suggests a few more will see Wycombe's promotion odds tumble - yes and East 17's Brian Harvey installed the new health minister.

25/01/97

Clearly we mis-understood the use of the word 'worth', as Gregory keeps with the same team that faced Rotherham. Paul Read cheers the fans no end by hitting a double strike, and John Gregory cheers them too by taking Neil Davis off, replacing him with Desouza who sets up Read's second within minutes of coming on. 3-1 to the Wanderers. Keith Ryan makes his first public appearance since the Club Eden incident, alongside Mr Hutchinson at half time, accompanied by the horrific Guns 'n' F**kin' Roses (to their fans) cover of Paul McCartney's epic Bond theme Live & Let Die. Finally, Terry Evans' sponsored car is seen sprouting a miniature flag pole, complete with a resplendent George Cross on the dashboard. True, it may help with damage free parking at Millwall, but only if Tel covers up his name and Wycombe Wanderers' that are emblazoned on the side. The Metropolitan Police are believed to have suggested that Paul McCarthy should not follow his captains' patriotic lead if driving to the New Den!

28/01/97

John Gregory's bid for Neil Davis is sadly turned down by Villa - publicans report above average sales throughout South

Bucks! However the gaffer is determined that this is not the last of the matter. 'Brian Little has promised to keep me informed', says the gaffer to Dave Peters in the BFP. All this fuss for a bloke actually worse than Savo Milosevic! Rumours are heard that John Cornforth needs an operation on that hamstring.

31/01/97

The person behind the heavy metal drivell at Adams Park last week is revealed in the BFP as none other than Capt. Terrence Evans, who believes that the oppo will cower at the intimidating caterwauling of Axl Rose and his greasy pals. Tel claims the only way to get pumped up is to listen to the American, ahem, wild men of rock - dismissing with a single stroke the millions of dance music fans who get pumped up (by the mind bending killer drug Ecstasy - The Sun / Mail et al.) every weekend. John Gregory sensibly dismisses Terry's attempts to make Adams Park the footballing equivalent of meeting Martin McGuinness in a dark alley by pointing out the great hospitality at Man Utd and Arsenal. To TAF's knowledge, former Preston boss John Beck is the foremost mover in such spoiling tactics, and his teams have always been crap, so do everyone a favour and keep the tape in your car Tel!

5/02/97

Wanderers beat a Fulham side containing the handicap that is Jason Solomon 2-0, with Paul McCarthy netting a double strike. Attempts at improving the score are thwarted by glory seeker Brian McGorry, who spends all afternoon cueing up shots for himself. Youth team guru Alan Beeton impresses in central defence - give the lad a five year contract we say! After the game the Centre Spot bar is shut, thus losing the club a small fortune (OK, a shandy and two orange juices).

7/02/97

Wycombe fans guzzle Pop Tarts to the shock news that the club look likely to have sold a player for cash - Matt Lawrence to Fulham for £30,000. The departure of Smithy's boy provokes your TAF crew onto a weekend bender at a classy holiday venue (no, not Sandals). Meanwhile the curse of WWISC strikes again - last season their sponsored player

Matty Crossley spent the whole year injured, and this years, Damien Markman, has cleared off to Harrow Borough. Oh dear. Meanwhile TAF are doing no better as Gazza Patts leaves his month's loan at Barnet to move on to Chesterfield. Also in the BFP, Gregory reveals that he thinks the Wanderers home kit was, 'Designed by Stevie Wonder!' Could cause a few problems between Mark Austin and the Mizuno people. Mercifully it is reported that others are speaking out about the shameful antics of Adams Apple, TAF says stick 'em in front of Beeks and Co. and see if they like it!

8/02/97

Wanderers beat Crewe 2-0 at home with another goal from Paul Read, sending them to the dizzy heights of 21st. Adams Apple are nowhere to be seen (hurrah)!

11/02/97

Teletext carries an interview with Millwall's new co-gaffer, none other than the much loved David Kemp. Kempy reveals he's been coaching in the USA (bang goes a prospective generation of American football stars), and is glad to be back in the domestic game, so are we Dave - a guaranteed three points at the New Den. For some reason the lions have shunned the services of Kamp's sinister sidekick Alan Smith - that said, such futuristic coaching skills, coupled with elaborate packaging would cost a pretty penny, far too much for the bankrupt club.

14/02/97

Valentines day turns sour as Ron Barnett, the most inconsequential columnist in the Cosmos, finally proves his love for Smith and Kemp is over. No more cosy bald eagle monickers for our Ron, who obviously fancies himself as the Richard Littlejohn of the BFP. Sadly for Ron, slagging off Smith was most useful while he was still here - bit frightened were we? TAF forgets to send a card to Gary Patterson. Tears? You wouldn't want to know. Meanwhile a local vicar asks punters to pray for the Wanderers, Mark Austin spots a ruse (it's that BA you know), and orders three thousand prayer cushions that amazingly double up as programme holders (i.e. you can fold them in half).

CORNFORTH

GURU OR GRANDAD? THE FANS DECIDE

Little has caused so much controversy in recent years than the purchase of John Cornforth. The "will he/won't he play" scenario has been dragging on for a couple of months now and questions are beginning to be raised about the £50,000 transfer. TAF sat firmly on the fence and invited two supporters to air their opposing views on the subject, bringing about a heated exchange on a par with the great Tony Hemmings debates in the early 90's.....i.e. was the nippy winger any good???

The debate went as followed:

Supporter 1:

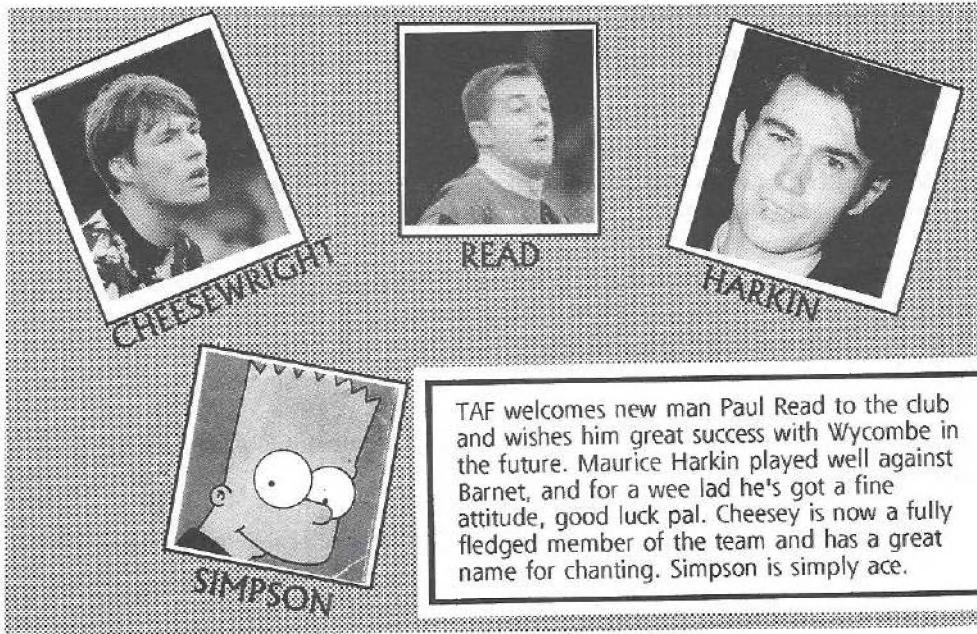
Let me tell you when we bought John Cornforth from Birmingham for £50,000 I was dancing around the room with delight. The Welsh Wizard, as he's known to Swansea fans, has one of the most cultured boots' outside the premier league. Apparently after Fry's departure, Sullivan, the chairman of Birmingham City, demanded that some quick transfers were needed as the club's wage bill was in trouble of putting the club heavily into the red. Hence a sad Trevor Francis was forced to sell off some of his assets for cut-down fees. So Corny arrived. How tragic therefore to see this full Welsh international limp off having injured himself in what were atrocious playing conditions on his home debut against Walsall. Only minutes previous to his injury he had almost broken the crossbar with a 30-yard bender which would have been one of the goals of the season. I felt so gutted for the man as I felt we needed a goalscoring playmaker to help us rise out of the depths of the division. However John is now on the mend and is going to be hopefully pulling the strings, not in his leg, but in midfield. Along with Micky Simpson and/or Dave Carroll, he'll make Wycombe a formidable force once again. Just think, with Steve Brown and Keith Ryan also returning from injuries in the coming months, John Gregory is going to be saddled with a midfield full of riches, and at the heart of it a shining gem.....arise Sir John Cornforth.

Supporter 2:

Corny? What as in "very bad joke"? - because that's how I see the recent purchase of John Cornforth. A dip into the Rothmans football yearbook shows

that this man has rarely ever got through a season without some ailment. I've heard it said in some quarters that his knees are so dodgy that he makes Keith Ryan and Terry Evans look like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Whatsmore he seems to be sporting a more than ample beer gut, possibly one of the side-effects of lazing around on the physio's bed all day. Now perhaps I'm being a little harsh on the lad for he has proven himself to be a quality player on his day. However I just can't help thinking that Trevor Francis has stitched Wycombe up like the proverbial kipper and lumbered Wycombe with a £50,000 deficit and a few hefty medical bills to boot.

So there we have it - the forming of what could be one of the great debates of the Gregory era. Here at TAF we say give the lad a chance to sort out his dodgy 'string and heel, shed a few pounds and reach full fitness. Only then can we judge whether or not John is a Welsh wizard or Welsh wazzock. Anyway what's all the fuss about - compared with the £100,000 tag splashed out for Dave Farrell, it could be the bargain of the decade.



TAF welcomes new man Paul Read to the club and wishes him great success with Wycombe in the future. Maurice Harkin played well against Barnet, and for a wee lad he's got a fine attitude, good luck pal. Cheesey is now a fully fledged member of the team and has a great name for chanting. Simpson is simply ace.

Seymour Crumbleberry's Super Facts.



Hello fact fans, it's Seymour Crumbleberry football factster and all round fascinating bloke. I recently got a 'phone call from my old friend Doctor Willy Proctor.

Apparently the good doctor has gone on another one of his long "holidays" to the Isle Of Wight. Being a conscientious fellow he didn't want to leave TAF in the lurch so he asked me to fill in for him.

Unfortunately I don't know much about sports related injuries or Doctor Willy's infamous "hands-on" approach to treatment. What I do know lots about though is football trivia. Seeing as the Blues are not having the easiest of seasons I thought I cheer you up with some super relegation facts.

- Manchester City were the first club to be relegated with a positive goal difference at the end of the 1937/38 season.
- Denis Law scored his last goal in first class football at Old Trafford while playing for Manchester City. His 85th minute strike sent hi old club, Manchester United, down to the old Division 2.
- Mick Channing of Southampton was Division 1's top goal scorer in 1973/74 with 21 goals in spite of which his club was still relegated. A similar fate befell Bob Hatton of Blackpool in the 1977/78 season when he scored 22 goals in Division 2 and still saw his team drop a division.
- Huddersfield Town became the first old Division 1 champions to play in Division 4 after successive relegations.
- In 1971 Reading celebrated it's club centenary by being relegated to Division 4 for the first time in their history.
- In 1919 Leeds City were expelled from Division 2 after making illegal payments. Their place was taken by Port Vale who, in 1968 were themselves expelled for the same reason, though they were soon readmitted.

- At the end of the 1921 Serie 'A' season Udinese and Bari both needed to win to stay in Italy's top division. The two sides had to play each other on the last day of the season. Bari were 2-1 up into injury time and Udinese looked certain to be relegated. However with last kick of the game Guseppe Cassirelli scored the equaliser which, although it was too late to save his own side, dragged Bari down with them.

- Irish League side Glentoran were relegated despite finishing only nine points behind the champions Cork. The Irish FA had decided to reduce the number of teams in the First Division by five. Six would be relegated and only one promoted. Glentoran were seventeen points above the team directly below them at the end of the season but still couldn't prevent themselves from being relegated.

- In 1954 Benfica played a local side in a pre-season friendly. Little did they know however that 90 minutes later three of their players would have broken legs and one a smashed nose. It was only until after the game that they realised that they had played the local prison team, who had been offered the game as a surprise treat! The extent of the injuries to key players saw them eventually get relegated for the first time in their illustrious history.

- Alloa Athletic were relegated in the most bizarre fashion in 1949, when due to a flu bug which had gone around the training camp, 8 of the players cried off on match day and the managers three teenage sons of 15, 16 and 18 were roped in to make their first and last appearances for the club. They were stuffed 7-0.

- Rochdale's Stanley Jones, a journeyman striker in the 1920's - achieved an amazing feat in the same decade when he turned out for no less than 8 different teams in successive seasons. Every team he played for got relegated in that same season, but he still went on to represent his home country - Wales.

Perhaps the most unusual relegation story involves Go Ahead Eagles from Holland. By December in the 1967/68 season they were eight points clear at the top of the Dutch league. However, during a home league match against Feyenoord a naked female fan ran onto the pitch and smashed a bottle over the referee's head. The Dutch FA awarded the game to Feyenoord and deducted six points from Go Ahead.

Two weeks later the team were returning from training when their team coach swerved off the road and landed in a frozen river. Three players were killed and six other first team regulars were out for the rest of the campaign. The team didn't win another match all season. On the last day of the season they needed a draw to avoid the drop. In the last minute, the manager's seventeen year old son, on his league debut, headed the ball past his own keeper and Go Ahead were relegated for the first time in their history.

As this column is written one week before the date of issue, I along with the rest of my TAF chums, will be hoping that this issue is somewhat more topical than issue 25. That issue, of course, contained our 'Free Simon Garner' campaign, and went on sale about a week after he had been! Naturally, it goes without saying that all of us were chuffed that the Godfather had escaped a prison Christmas, but I must declare that a cruel streak in me was momentarily gutted at the thought of our printer churning out TAF's with a rather irrelevant cover. Still, no-one moaned or was sarky - and they could have been. Perhaps the incident was best summed up by the wonderful 'Chairboys on the Net', who pointed out that it was the thought that counted.

Talking of the internet, another site has been added that is dedicated to the Blues - known as 'Electric Chairboys', which is full of top gags and Andy Warhol type design. The address is,

<http://www.bogo.co.uk/oscar/bodg1.htm>

It's been a strange old time on the pitch since the last TAF, with a mixture of great wins (Crewe and York), tragic showings (Rotherham), sheer misfortune (Peterborough), and ice wrecked tragedy (Bradford and Walsall). Despite all this, Wycombe have slowly improved their position so that, before the Preston setback, escape from relegation now looks a decent, if far from certain, proposition.

The key reason for this seems to be the improving home form - when I go to Adams Park now I go believing we can win, a feeling that wasn't possible a few months ago. If only our away record could register two or three wins to go with the home form, we'd be laughing, but until that happens every weeks gain will be followed by a slide.

I was going to say that the month ahead contains some highly important games for the blues - but then every week for the last two months has been this way. I'm expecting Alan Parry to start claiming that life is never dull at Wycombe Wanderers, and he'd be right. I can't see us being safe until the very last moment, due to the bottom teams showing almost championship form at times.

Surely the most important match to win will be the re-match against the Peterborough theatrical

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association. Having already been 2-0 up, it would be a horrific blow to lose this game, especially if coupled with the sight of Fatty Fry running down the touchline. I did a spot of research in Sportspages in London, and found a 'boro fanzine claiming that Wycombe fans and the media were only picking on 'boro, because they had a famous manager, and that it was about time they had some luck. In all honesty, I can't believe any other team in this division has had a worse time than us with luck, and if there is a God somewhere justice will be done.

Moving on, it will soon be decision time for supporters regarding the Millwall game - to attend or to tune into 104.4 FM. Now the average footy fan may find it hard to believe this sort of statement, but believe me, a lot of folk will be asking it. At the start of the season, two of us TAFsters were considering checking out the myth and taking our best Dick Van Dyke accents into the home end, in the hope of checking out the reality. However, the desperate need to support Wycombe visually and vocally, plus a chronic case of bottling it, means that we'll probably be in the away end - still retaining the Van Dyke accents though.

Being the most practical section of TAF, the tattle reveals its top five **Things not to say outside The New Den**. In reverse order....

- 5) 'I wonder if there will be a match report in tomorrow's Sunday Telegraph?'
- 4) 'Isn't David Mellor much better on 606 than the bloke who did it before'
- 3) 'You've got to laugh at Millwall's chronic free fall haven't you?'
- 2) 'Can I use my credit card round here?'
- 1) 'Super Charlton, Super Charlton...'

Keep clear of these buzzwords and enjoy a safe day out.

Next, the tattle feels it pertinent to continue with an appraisal of Mr Gregory's new signings. Well, no complaints from us - indeed placed next to Smiffy's efforts they are positively splendid. Michael Simpson and, obviously, Paul Read take top marks so far, but Jason Kavanagh and, after a slow start, Michael Forsyth have been an asset to the club. The most interesting signing has been that of John Cornforth, who arrived in a blaze of publicity in December and has given us no more than 40 minutes of limited joy. Corny has been pencilled in by either Teletext, the BFP, or Alan Hutchinson for more revivals than Stiff Little Fingers - the optimist looks forward to his inclusion, the cynic wonders if that Birmingham's low price was fixed for a reason.

Finally, the tattle closes by congratulating ex-coach David Kemp on his securing of a new job. In issue 23 of TAF we suggested a number of jobs for Kempy and his mate Smith (who will have to remain as a media whore seeing as Millwall clearly aren't interested in resurrecting the double act). Amazing and outrageous as they were, we never believed that someone who has so clearly demonstrated, for want of a better word, his total shitness in the art of coaching, would have got a job as.... a coach!

They say stranger things happen at sea -

I think not.

Doppelganger!

Who saw the recent capers of Lincoln City's Terry Fleming, during their 3-1 home defeat by Wigan? In a master-stroke of deception, Terry, having been booked first half for a late tackle, got involved in the second period with a Wigan player at a throw-in, which culminated in an innocuous enough wrestling match, but which was deemed serious enough by Colonel Blink (or whoever was officiating that night) to merit a yellow card each - a second for Fleming. However, some quick thinking by the lad inspired him to give a false name, thus avoiding an early bath.

Now at the risk of sounding like a stereotypical bigot, I guess one could admit that with three or four black players in the Lincoln team (as Terry is), the ref, could have mistaken Terry for a colleague of similar appearance. But what about checking his shirt number - standard practice you would have thought? Terry (or his alias) got booked twice and carried on playing, but has since been charged by the FA for disrepute, despite Lincoln losing the match on the night. This led us to think - who could Wycombe players pass themselves off as, if when on a yellow card, the decision to tonk some hapless opponent for his troubles got the better of them? To be read and absorbed by all members of the playing staff.

JASON COUSINS - It is a little known fact that Jason is actually one of

sporting triplets, separated at birth to avoid their parents having to fork out loads for expensive sports kit. Yes, passing himself off as Damon Hill, Jason has been heard to utter: "Sorry - I braked too late, couldn't avoid the slide," having carved up a left winger, or as his second alias, Graham Thorpe, has mistaken his leg for a cricket bat: "Well, I was just trying to drive through long leg," as a lanky centre forward ends up with a tasty gash on his knee.

STEVE BROWN - "Brownie" has often been mistaken for Shadow from the Gladiators, which might explain, his combative attitude and cricket score disciplinary record last season. Indeed, during training sessions, after a "3..2..1" from Richard Hill, Steve has been known to pick up large centre halves sideways, using them as a cudgel, and start beating the crap out of fellow defenceless players.

DAVE CARROLL - Look, everyone knows that Dave is the Son of God, so refs never bother booking him. Don't want to jeopardise their chances at the Pearly Gates, do they?

ANTHONY CLARK - Could pretend to be one of Dave Carroll's kids.

DAVE FARRELL - Assuming that DF will pull on a Wycombe shirt again and find himself on a double yellow at some point in the future, he could always pass himself off as either Michael Simpson or Neil Davis (for when he comes back to Wycombe on a free transfer at the end of the season), as all three are peas in a pod. Or am I just getting too old in

thinking that all young people look the same these days?

JOHN WILLIAMS - A dead-ringer for Marvin Gaye (perhaps a bit taller), and if booked, could croon: "What's going on (what's going on)....", but would he escape the double yellow with a quick burst of, "Oh, mercy, mercy me - things ain't what they used to be...."?

TERRY SKIVERTON - Forever trying to convince us that he's in fact a strawberry blonde and not a stroppy carrot-top, Terry has always struck me as the spitting image of Bonnie Langford. I've never seen him perform a pirouette with Wayne Sleep, though, so not sure how many refs would buy it.

PAUL McCARTHY - Popping down to the old Capital League ("the League that counts") recently, we were all mightily relieved to see the return of Macca's crusty beard, which prompted comparisons with subterranean A30 protester, Swampy. So, we now know the secret diet of Paul's superb skills - a pack of Bourbon biscuits (the Norseman Lager of the biscuit world), (Total rubbish, and you know it - ed) and contaminated underground spring water - the gaffer has obviously found him out, hence his recent spell on the bench.

MO HARKIN - Roy Keane, to a tee, although he'll have to get several things sorted out before any referees buy his nom de plume. (i) A fortnight's bumfluff is no substitute for Roy's fearsome stubbled chin; (ii) He's never been heard swearing on the

pitch, although he did utter, "Sweet Mother of Mary," at a youth team game, and promptly had to run off to confession; (iii) Must learn to tackle with both feet - at once of course.

MICKEY BELL - "Alright, alright - everything's gonna be alright!" Who could deny the uncanny resemblance between our Michael and the ex-East 17 front man, Brian Harvey, who I gather is looking for a new career where drugs may be found easily? (Football will be his first choice, then). The prohibition on facial hair at Adams Park however, will mean that Mickey will seldom get upset by mourning East 17 fans unless he starts wearing his jeans and hat back-to-front.

ALAN BEETON - Rob out of the Stereo MC's or Plug out of the Beezer.

JASON KAVANAGH - Is in fact teenage heart-throb, Kavanagh - clever that.

RICHARD HILL - If he were still playing, could fob himself off as either Steve Stone (miraculous return from injury), or the lead simian from Planet of the Apes.

TERRY EVANS - Is none other than the Chief, from "One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest" - not sure how many games of professional soccer he played, mind.

GARY PATTERSON - Max Wall (according to John Gregory)

BRIAN PARKIN - A 'dead ringer' for Corrie's cafe entrepreneur Roy Cropper! (sorry Roy).

Dear Mark Austin

We at TAF never fail to be amazed at the generosity and thoughtfulness of you, the true Wanderers supporter. Ignoring the Wanderers in their time of need is not your forte. Trips to Wembley are not necessities. Refusing help to our hard pressed commercial department is unthinkable.

Yes, ever since our above named commercial manager's 'cry for help' in last months Blues News, hundreds of TAF readers have written in with commercial suggestions and demanding that we publish them. And seeing as Ivor and his directors have been in everyone's good books recently, with cash being made available, the Dear Ivor column takes a back seat for now. Bring on the suggestions....

Dear Mark,

On visiting your resplendent ground last week, I heard of your financial hardship and couldn't help noticing a number of empty executive boxes. Surely it would be a pertinent idea to rent these out as holiday homes - ideal as a weekend break in the countryside for east end slum kids. A family of four (or the DSS) could easily be tempted to shell out a handsome sum to live in such luxury, all you need to do is put on some entertainment on Friday and Saturday night - some strippers, a lovely legs contest, racist comedian perhaps - and you could find yourself with so many bookings you'll need to turn that last remaining terrace into a fun pub with 'Bowlingo'!

And if that's not enough, Wanderers players who live far away could be put up in the boxes during the week. There are toilets, a bar, and I'm sure your groundsman would be more than happy to share the use of the bathing facilities in his suave flat.

Yours in business

Billy Butlin, Bognor Regis, Sussex

What a fantastic idea Mr Butlin, we can't believe no-one thought of it before!

Dear Mark,

Here's an idea to raise you big cash. On the London Underground, buskers are liable to a £200 fine - even more if they constantly break the law. Why not make decent Wycombe peepers and your bank manager happy by introducing this law at Adams Park. It would raise much needed funds and rid the stadium of this unsightly and indecent menace.

Michael Howard, London SW1

Zero tolerance from Mickey there, but in this instance TAF agrees; fine them, confiscate their brass section, buy them a Beatles songbook and a second hand acoustic guitar, and send them back to Oxford Circus where they belong.

Dear Mark,

I couldn't help but be touched by your admission in Blues News, and thought

up a little half-time entertainment that could raise funds and boost supporters' morale - it's called 'Smith Invaders'™.

In a nutshell, the pitch contains an army of Alan Smith look-alikes (perhaps fifty to sixty) who march forwards towards the family stand one pace every ten seconds. In the family stand, using Bluey the Swan as a shield, young children use live grenades and rifles in an attempt to stem the flow of Alan's. Not only does this instill in the child essential knowledge regarding the social battle of good versus evil (Swan versus Smith), but also gives children much needed discipline, and teaches them to respect lethal weapons.

Anyway, if the Alan's reach the family stand, the children get a package - containing a signed photo of Alan, and an Alan Smith coaching manual (an A5 leaflet). Should the Alan's be wiped out, the kiddies get to keep the ammo, and ten pounds. If the Alan's are obliterated along with the mother ship David Kemp, who will sporadically run the gauntlet between the plastic dugouts, a season ticket for life and a free subscription to that 20 part magazine about serial killers, is given to the lucky child.

With Stuart Hall commentating, and a guest appearance by Eddie Waring's dipstick, the entertainment would be magnificent.

What do you say to that?

Sergeant Major Ian Tolerance (retd), Gerrards Cross, Bucks

Nutter?!

Dear Mark,

I represent a number of top artists (have you heard of Alvin Stardust?), and would be interested in putting on a weekend of some of Britain's hottest new talent (Suzi Quatro, Shakin' Stevens, and The Alarm for starters).

Shatrank management are very interested in using your ground for this promotion, as we hear your local council is very liberal with granting permission for your projects. The concert would take place in late June / early July and we would need to trample over your pitch, destroying grass seeds etc., with all manner of gear for about one week.

It is my experience that groundsman get rather irritable about this sort of thing, but we find the offer of a signed photo of the above acts usually does the trick.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Mani Hotlovingsonofagun, Shatrank Management, Slough, Berks

C'mon Mark, with celebs like that Wycombe could be the new Glastonbury!

So there you have it, plenty of top advice and fund-raising ideas for the commercial dept. to get to work on - believe us, they will do to. Finally this letter arrived as we went to press.

Dear Mark,

How about buying the Spice Girls to play in midfield? Top crumpet like!

Gary Patterson, No fixed abode, England

Who needs the Spice glamour, we have Dave Carroll friend!

the DIARY

They all love me, they can't have me, heeeeeyyy, Macarena. Greetings disco kids, and welcome to another Diary session. Yep, the social column that puts Dempster and all the others in the shade opens its network of contacts yet again - especially for you, as Kylie and Jase once crooned before Jason discovered droogs. But enough of the guff, on with the hard stuff.....

Capital Chapple

Your boys in blue have been rather thin on the ground in Wycombe recently (possibly something to do with the fact none of them live anywhere near it), but other top footballing celebs have been visiting the home of furniture (and we're not talking DFS either). The Diary was stunned by the sight of hunky Woking manager Geoff Chapple at the recent Capital League match, versus Fulham. A proper picture of health, the FA Cup king was seen enquiring about full back Graham Hall, and TAF's new fave Alan Beeton. As we go to press it is unclear whether TAF shouts of 'I've no idea what a star like Brian McGarry is doing in the reserves', have persuaded Chapple to open his chequebook to pour much needed reserves into Gregory's fighting fund.

More Murdoch Madness

Of course, the hot news in the media world where we hang out is the advent of digital telly. Just as 70% or so of Blighty gets itself in a lather at the prospect of a fifth channel (complete with the lovely Mary Nightingale!), the major powers gather together to offer us the chance to have 30 of the things, without purchasing a satellite dish, musical doorbell, and obligatory stone cladding. But if that wasn't fantastic enough, the Diary has learnt over a Pot Noodle brunch with Rupert Murdoch of his plans for Sky Sports 4 - the Capital League Channel! Hosted by Wanderers' own Brian McGarry (due to his extensive CL experience with Wycombe and Peterborough), Sky will show the match of the week on Friday nights (starting with Crawley Town versus Leyton Orient) and a selection of highlights, profiles, and hilarious 'wacky moments' from 'the league that counts'. At the bargain price of £12.99 per month (£13.99 if you want those all important Doxhill cup matches as well), TAF says be a pioneer and get in there!

Posh Problems

Although covered elsewhere in TAF, the Diary has heard of yet another twist in the saga of the Peterborough match. Apparently one 'boro player was so incensed at the prospect of being late home for Noel's House Party, due to the coach being held up by brave blues fans, he leapt off the bus and attempted to

indulge in fisticuffs with a said fan. Sanity was restored when lardy gaffer Barry Fry plopped off the coach and neutralised the problem by clearing the area using only the stench from his charming armpits!

Down in the Sewer

Oh no, crusties a go go. The Diary can exclusively reveal that the much fabled Wanderers training pitch has been delayed yet again, due to the interference of a local roadaphobic - none other than celebrity crusty, Swampy! Current affairs fans will be aware that the last anarchist out of the tunnels at the A30 road project in Devon, has been discovered digging a lair underneath the chalkpile at Adams Park. Swampy, who lives with his parents in the oppressed 'hood' of Hazlemere, is reported to be furious at the possible destruction of rare chalk weeds and a number of active ants nests, to make way for the plastic pitch. Chairman Ivor Beeks is leading peace negotiations with the Swampster, but is under pressure from liberal associate director John Goldsworthy to call in the RAF and bomb him out.

Why, Why, Watford?

Former Wanderers are turning out all over the shop these days, making a videoing of Nationwide league extra a must. For example, King Hyde himself is 'twixt the stix' at Leyton Orient, Steve Guppy is still knocking the odd one in for Port Vale and Matt Lawrence is enabling Fulham to blow it with the aid of his 'skills'. But as you peruse this paragraph, former TAF cover star Keith Scott could be turning out for pools punters' favourites Watford. Let's hope the man has a stinker of a game, but make the lad welcome, like Brentford fans do with Tel Evans - he might just score an own goal for us!

Dodgy Desborough Doings (reprise)

Meanwhile, another Wycombe player has shown his face in the Desborough Road shopping area of town. TAF readers will be aware of Steve McGavin's £30 pie suppers in 'Tuck-in', and Mig Desouza's poorly disguised and, well frankly seedy antics at undies store 'Feathers' - but we must move to the other end of the precinct to hear that carrot-topped competitor Terry Skiverton has been buying large quantities of wood to block up the windows of his house in anticipation of the summer sun. Says Terry, 'Summer is hell for my people - my house is a refuge for them'. TAF says thank heavens for Issac Lord!

Swan Lake (of tears)

Thankfully 'Adams Apple' went the same way as John Williams has gone, against Crewe, therefore TAF is pleased to report a positive Bluey the Swan story!!! As the graceful creature swept around Adams Park, a magical moment occurred - one that even Robin Williams would regard as just too nice. A young child turned to his father and asked, 'Daddy, is that a real swan'? And with that comment, your cynical, sneering, but ultimately sensitive Diary, closes its tear stained tome, and for once concedes to Mark Austin.

SIGN UP! Or we'll be round

OK - perhaps we're being a little confrontational with our sales approach here, but it really is in your interests to *subscribe* to The Adams Family - Wycombe Wanderers' Number One fanzine, and now - would you believe - into its fifth year of production? For a measly one squid per issue, you get a sparkling copy of TAF winging its way to your doormat by the morning of the matchday that those bedraggled-looking plebs who sell outside the ground can be first seen with a new edition in their paws.

Still interested? Here's more detail:- a cheque or postal order for just £1 per copy will guarantee (Post Office strikes not notwithstanding) that the latest issue of TAF gets promptly delivered to the comfort of your own homes - just imagine the host of benefits connected with this: NO MORE queuing in 12 degrees of frost as the purple-fingered sellers attempt to locate small change for you; NO MORE going out of your house ever again just to buy TAF (although we couldn't of course condone not coming to Adams Park at all!); NO MORE sheepish apologies as you discover that you have:

- (a) A £50 note and nowt smaller.
- (b) 57p in coppers - "Er, is that enough?" (Yeah, like we can really be arsed to count it).
- (c) A chequebook only (and no pen).

As if all that weren't enough, everyone applying to subscribe for five or more issues (i.e. one whole season's worth), will receive a bumper pack of all available back issues *entirely free of charge*, to wit, numbers 3, 5, 8, 10, 13, 15, 18-25 stretching from Jan. '92 to Jan. '97. If, of course, you don't need copies of any of these, please let us know and they will go, while stocks last, to a more deserving home. So, if you want to sign up for the final edition of this season and all of season 1997/98, a cheque/PO for £6 (payable to D.Chapman) will ensure delivery of the goods. This offer applies to anybody within Europe (free back issues to UK subscribers only though), however, if by some chance you're reading this in Peru and fancy learning about Willy Procter's latest massage techniques, please add £0.50 per issue.

Finally, a brief mention to all TAF readers in the (until now) sorely neglected North of England - if any of you feel that the prospect of subscribing to TAF is too risky a venture, then our humble periodical can now be purchased from 'Sportspages' in Barton Square, central Manchester, as well as in their splendid outlet just off Charing Cross Road in London. Give them a call on 0161-832 8530 if you're totally lost. Happy reading, playmates!

**'The first thing
I did after
getting the
boot was to
get my TAF
subscription
sorted out'**

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POSH CRY OFF

Why have Wycombe never had a match abandoned when they have been losing? The game against Peterborough could be extremely costly to Wycombe but it isn't the first time we have been denied three points by the weather.

I can remember three matches that have been abandoned halfway through. The first was against Merthyr Tydfill at Loakes Park. We were 1-0 up courtesy of an Andy Kerr header from the edge of the box. Then, within the space of about ten minutes the pitch had become flooded due to a freak storm that saw half of Wycombe town centre under water. The ref had no choice but to call off the game. I can't remember the result of the re-match but it was typical that we were winning when the game was washed-out.

In our penultimate season in the Conference we were well on top against Farnborough who had lost their 'keeper with a broken leg. The ref was concerned about the pitch and asked the players if they wanted to continue. It was 1-1 at the time, but as we were so on top and they had lost their 'keeper, the Farnborough players bottled it and legged it down the tunnel. Amazingly we won the re-match 2-1.

The Peterborough game was a complete farce. The Posh players only seemed to be affected by the conditions when they went behind. Seeing grown men rolling around in agony after falling on the nasty hard pitch was pathetic. With the fog coming down they employed time-wasting tactics despite being behind, presumably in the hope that the visibility would become so bad the ref would stop the match. The ref did stop the match, but not for fog but for frost. We spoke to Alan Parry after the game. He said he had been on the pitch when it was declared fit and it was in the same condition just before the kick-off. He didn't believe the pitch was playable from the start but said it was in no worse a condition when the game was abandoned. Having started the match the ref should have let it finish.

I paid £8.00 to watch that game, the re-match will cost another £8.00. If I wanted to spend £16.00 for one match I'd go and watch a Premier League game. I don't believe the club should let people into the re-match for free or even for a reduced price. The club just couldn't afford it and it wasn't their fault the ref was a half-wit. If the club were to let supporters in cheap it should be on the basis that the Football League re-imburse the club for every penny lost. They appointed the ref (who

incidentally received his full match fee and expenses) and someone should be answerable for his actions. I don't think the club or supporters should be left out of pocket due to the incompetence of an official.

The Peterborough players must be laughing to themselves. They hoodwinked the ref and got out of jail that day. I really hope that when the re-match comes round we do to them what they did to us at London Road. Maybe we'll stuff them by so much Barry Fry will have to sack himself.

One story from that match that didn't get in the Bucks Free Press concerns one of my work colleagues who is the definition of all mouth and no trousers. When the Peterborough coach was leaving the ground a group of Wycombe supporters walked in front of it at snails pace down Hillbottom road and wouldn't let it pass. One of the players got so impatient he got off the coach and told them to get out of the road and onto the pavement. The Wycombe fans wouldn't budge claiming the pavement was so frosty they might slip over. Next thing half the Peterborough squad have got off the bus and are squaring up with my mate. He was grabbed by the lapels and asked if he would like to wake up in hospital which he "bravely" replied with "If I do you'll wake up in prison". Luckily for him Barry Fry decided to intervene and ordered his team back on the coach. Unfortunately I don't know the name of the player who got arsey, however, when we play them again I think every time one of their players starts moaning we should all stand up, turn our backs to the pitch, point our butts at the player, slap our cheeks and scream "Batty Bum-Sweat" until he cries. Childish I know but it could prove effective.

The recent game against Walsall was played on an ice-rink of a pitch. The players could barely stand up and no one would risk running with the ball. The game should never have been allowed to start but, once it did it had to finish and we lost 2-0. You can bet your bottom dollar that had we been winning 2-0 the ref would have called a halt to proceedings after 85 minutes.

How can one game be played and another called off? Referees have certain guidelines to follow when deciding whether or not a pitch is playable. It never can be a precise science but surely if they are not 100% sure the pitch will stand up to a full game they shouldn't let it start. It just common sense, unfortunately that doesn't seem to be a job requirement for referees.

The Adams Family - Its a space filling thing

BRASSED OFF BY STEPTOE

Wherever you choose to sit/stand at Adams Park you are pretty much always guaranteed a good view and we all hope an enjoyable game. This was certainly how it used to be down at the Blues but those of us in block 'S' of the new stand have found our enjoyment of the game has been disrupted week in week out by two appalling inconveniences.

1) Adams Parks very own rotten Adams Apple (that crap band)

These hugely untalented gormos ruin my own and, I'm told, many other punters enjoyment of the game. Why do we as a club have this barmy notion that the spectators have to be entertained by a load of halfwits who were quite obviously the school jerks. These are people who probably worried themselves stupid about walking to school knowing the odds of getting there unscathed were as slim as a Panatella. We've not been blessed with the best football this season and this is no substitute. The tunes are nothing short of a woeful embarrassment to the club and it's fans. I'm sure there are those of you who might think the band are a nice little idea. My answer, you're not sitting close enough. This brings forward an idea for a fair compromise. Why don't the band move around the ground each week finding new faces to upset. This would be music to block 'S's ears and a change is as good as a rest, although the latter would be heaven sent. We would then only have our ears intoxicated once every six or seven games and they may have even learnt a new repertoire. If I paid eight quid to go to the Wycombe Swan and see a brass band (highly unlikely) perform, only to be put off by Miguel Desouza and Jason Cousins hoofing a ball up and down the isles I would not be best pleased and to be honest I can see very little difference between these two situations. I wonder how the directors at the blues would feel to have these pit ponies blowing off in front of them all game. Come on chaps lets hold on to what dignity we have. Lose the band.

2) The Steptoes.

This name has been given to the over the top noise pollution gang who sit right at the back of block 'S'. I do find it really rather strange to be moaning about a group of people who make a little noise whilst supporting their team, but it's the manner in which

these geezers do it that I find hard to except. The noise is a series of high pitched squeaks and squawks that constantly ring out with very little let up. It can be very hard to actually hear what they say but after so many weeks their vocabulary has become clear and for the first time in print here are the Steptoes lyrics. "KU MON WICKEM SKOAR" or a little more diverse "KU MON WICK-EM". All this in itself is not the only problem 'Arold' and his chums stand for. They totally insist that we all join in with them. Not doing so apparently just goes to prove you are not a real fan. Calling all around them traitors may be a good laugh for them but I'm not sure they realise this doesn't form the sort of bond that's going to have people gagging to join their Barber Shop bombardment. Please Steptoes, learn some new chants, some manners and take some singing lessons, then and only then will other people consider joining in. Until this time give us the odd break and allow us to chant how we want and when we want.

So I hear you question, why don't I sit somewhere else? Well unfortunately I have a season ticket for block 'S' and I love the view, so I'm stuck in a catch 22 situation. Finally for those of you who may have thought of sitting in block 'S' for a very reasonable £8, do, but wear some ear plugs.

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LETTERS

Dear TAF

As a student in Manchester, I don't manage to see a lot of the Blues. However my sister regularly sends me TAF and cuts out the sports pages of the BFP. What with regular access to "Chairboys on the Net" at college I feel as if I know the "ins and outs" at Wycombe as well as you locals.

Now the point of my letter is not to rant on about the improving technology these days, but to ask why the club still feel that they need to provide "Ringing the Blues" at such a rip off price. Whereas I used to call it regularly I now haven't rung it in a year. However over the Christmas period, I planned to come to a few Wycombe games. With the weather being poor I needed up to date info on the games. I tried phoning the switchboard, but could never get through. Hence the moment I dreaded had arrived. I tentatively dialed 01494 - 446855....oh silly me 0891 - 446855, and it took me ages to get any decent info on the games.

Now what is my point I hear you ask. Well I have just received my phone bill and my 5 minutes of Ringing the Blues cost me nigh on £3. Therefore I am writing to ask whether or not you can persuade the club to bring back a basic information line available at the local rate. My dad said that John Goldsworthy used to do one back at Loakes Park, which just gave you about 20 seconds of info, but enough to know whether a game was on or if Wycombe had won. The club could still do Ringing the Blues for hardcore addicts, but the average fan would surely benefit from this idea. Hows about it then lads.

Tim Reinalt
Rusholme
Manchester

P.S. I heard about Big Tels Guns 'n Roses tape before the game....I have to say I prefer The Dambusters theme myself. Does anyone agree?

TAF: *We certainly do Tim, although even Axl Rose and his chums are preferable to the normal diet of Tina Turner, Elton John etc. Perhaps whoever is in charge of the PA could get hold of a copy of "The Dambusters" - just remember though no rude chants about Slough!*

As for the alternative phone line, this is something that we have discussed amongst ourselves before. You're right, John Goldsworthy used to do it, sometimes at 2AM in the morning when he sounded like he'd had one scotch too many in the boardroom. And it would certainly be a welcome addition for many Blues fans who can't afford a phonebill which reads like the Australian cricket teams first innings scorecard (when they play England of course). So hows about it fellows of the board?

Dear Adams Family

I'm sure the last person you want to hear from is a smug Posh fan. Just a quick note to say "what goes around, comes around". We were losing 2-0, with no signs of getting back in the game, so I can't say I'm anything but happy. I'm also sure all Wycombe fans can't say they're anything but pissed off. If it's any consolation, our first thoughts went back to October 1985, when we were winning 1-0 away at Tranmere when the floodlights failed. The game was abandoned after 57 minutes, and we lost the subsequent replay game 7-0! What I'm trying to say is that one day you'll look back on this and laugh. Honest.

From our point of view, we thought the game should never really have started. We also spoke to a couple of Wycombe fans after the game who agreed. The referee really has a lot to answer for. Surely that pitch was in no different condition at the point of abandonment than at 10.30 in the morning when it was inspected. And whilst, under the circumstances I'm sure our opinions of the situation will differ, for the caller to Radio 5's "6:06" to suggest Posh players were falling over on purpose is ridiculous. I would agree that, in general, your players adapted to the conditions better, but they too had their problems. In particular, your right back was having terrible problems. On the callers presumption that our players were falling over on purpose, then your right back must have been pissed!

Finally, to the couple of half-wits who decided to try and take out their disappointment on Posh fans outside the ground, get a life. It was the referee that abandoned the game, not us. My god, what planet are you on?

Well, I'm afraid (from your point of view) the law of sod dictates that we will probably win the replayed game. One thought on that game - if your club decides that season ticket holders have nothing to pay for the game, then remember that they are paying customers just the same as anyone else. Therefore, if that situation arises, everyone who was at the first game should be let in for free. I'm not looking out for Posh fans here, this applies to home fans just as much, if not more.

Anyway, all the best for the rest of the season - win, lose or draw against us.

R. Hounsell
Peterborough

Thanks for the letter mate. However with the league table in its current position, I don't think we'll manage to look back and laugh should we get a stuffing in the replay. It was obvious to all and sundry that Peterborough players were doing their best to get the game abandoned - I even saw one of them arguing with the ref as another player "slipped" dramatically onto the deck.

In the above letter, our friend also mentions that a few thugs tried to create a bit of hassle outside the ground. Yes, I saw them, and I can tell you that they were the Peterborough players! What happened was that a small protest by Wanderers fans in front of the coach saw the appearance of a few players. One of whom got one lad into a necklock and asked him if "wanted some". Now there's a fine example to set to the fans of tomorrow. At the end of the day, lets just hope that come the replay, our boys and us fans are so fired up we'll annihilate them. Up your arse Fry!

THAT'S MY BOY

"Boss, boss - Can I clean your car?"

"Gaffer - any chance of some extra training"

"Sir Alan, I beg your pardon, Master Smith. Where did you learn to be such a tactician?"

"Mr Suddaby, why do we only train two nights a week?"

The above quotes are from a vast selection that I have gathered over the years, a result of some strenuous training ground research tied in with a bit of hearsay. But young readers, take heed from the above comments. For if they are used in the right time and the right place, before you know it you could become a loyal servant to your footballing master. You too could play like a useless shite, but still pick up a healthy amount of respect from your footballing guru. Just look at the following examples:

ALAN GANE: His boys: Kevin Collins/Neil Price

OK - so it's not really on to slag off Gane. His season in charge brought with it not only a stylish team on the pitch (Ashford/Link etc) but a fair old dash of élan off it (i.e. That sheepskin coat). But who would have willingly played these two men week in week out? Kevin Collins was a midfield nonentity, notable only for sporting a shocking perm. When he left to back pack around Australia, one could only presume that a lovers tiff had occurred. He wasn't missed. As for the balding bucket of lard Price, it was comical to think that a couple of years prior to the 86/87 season, he had played in the FA Cup final for Watford. The man was an absolute state, and although he often gave 100% for the cause, few tears were shed when the following season we signed Sean Norman.

PETE SUDDABY: His boys: Alan Mayes/Nigel Gray

To be fair to this appalling manager, he didn't really have much time to establish any real favourites. However someone had to carry the can for the shoddy displays

that were a regular feature during his reign and you can look no further than these ageing geeks. Alan Mayes may have been a cultured striker in the 70's, but turning out in the GMVC he cut a tragic figure. Bereft of pace, presence and any other skill you can choose to think of, he became the laughing stock of the team, and even courted controversy in the WWFC fanzine of the time "Chairboys Gas". In this mag the editors depicted him as a blind cut-out striker in a parody/rip-off from Viz's "Billy the Fish", causing Mayes and the chairman to kick up a fair old stink. Loser.

Following on from Mayes, Blues fans had to witness the tragic spectacle that was Nigel Gray, a lanky goon whose distinct lack of skill and panache made Glynn Creaser look like Juninho. Luckily for Blues fans, Suddaby was not long to last, and nor were these two footballing plankton.

JIMMY KELMAN: His boy: Nigel Taylor

Where Kelman disposed of the "talents" of Alan Mayes and Nigel Gray, not much better fare was served up in the arrival of Nigel Taylor. Looking like a bloated Paul McCartney, this portly six-footer was used as a "utility" man. And true to tradition, you could substitute the word "utility" with "shite footballer" as Nigel would amble around the park doing sweet FA. Whether Kelman thought Taylor would blossom into a cultured midfielder is unclear, but the fact that he seemed to be on the teamsheet week after week suggested that some strange things were going on behind the scenes.

We can't leave Kelman without mentioning Mike Brady. OK so this perm-headed stateside goon only turned out in the Berks and Bucks Cup, but who paid for his air fair - that's what I want to know? Even Arthur Askey in his dying days would have managed to get the ball off of this tyke.

MARTIN O'NEILL: His boys: Simon Hutchinson/Keith Ryan/Keith Scott

Coming closer to the present day, and we reach our first "touchy subject". If you actually look at the players in the O'Neill years, very few were of poor quality. And if you look at O'Neill's record he actually fell out with more players than he was "chummy" with. However as we're looking at favourites it is only true to point out that there was a time when one asked "why?" as to the selection of Keith Ryan. He could play poorly for games one end, but still his name was on the teamsheet. But there is a happy ending to all this, as the Rhino suddenly blossomed into a massive talent and rightly justified his selection. So credit to O'Neill and Keith. The same could be said for the other Keith, Mr Scott, who had one spell that was so poor I truly believed that he would never score again...at any level. However Scottie turned into one of the best loved Wycombe players of recent times, and barring a goal against us for Watford, will continue to be just this. Furthermore I still think we should get him back on loan...imagine the frenzy the crowd would be whipped into!

Another O'Neill favourite was "The Hutch". Although he was very fast and errrrr, very injury prone, his stunning lack of consistency was depressing. However O'Neill thought he was the business, and rarely was Hutchinson seen outside the starting 13.

ALAN SMITH: His boys: Matt Lawrence/Jason Rowbotham/Dave Farrell

Not surprisingly, the above three were all purchases by the Smith-man, hence his constant picking of them was merely in the hope that they would produce the odd moment of skill. Which never happened with the exception of Dave Farrell, who still remains the "enigma" of the current squad.

Jason Rowbotham was an absolute disgrace of a player. How he ousted Cousins from the side will never be explained. You could tell his heart was never with the club, so it was with great joy that we heard that he had been released from his contract. His talentless hoofs from defence would have surely made Johnny Gregory cringe.

The same can almost be said for Matt Lawrence. Although not in the same league as Rowbotham, when he was put into midfield he was nothing short of appalling. He lacked pace and passing skill and was always second best in the tackle. His career revived when he had a short spell at right back at the start of the season, but I couldn't help being a little delighted when I heard that we'd squeezed £30,000 out of Fulham for him. Good luck to the lad and all that, but he won't be missed.

JOHN GREGORY: His boy: Neil Davis

Well in all fairness it's a little early to decide who his faves are. He claims that they're all his "little gems", so from that we can deduce that John Williams is a cheap pebble on Brighton beach whilst Neil Davis is the jewel in the Royal crown. Now I don't want to lay into Davis or the gaffer, as he's doing a creditable job thus far, but it really did seem unfair to continually play Davis and ignore Big John. The Davis/Read nexus which was on display at Rotherham looked lightweight and ineffective, whereas since Neil has gone back to Villa, the goals have started to flow again. Gregory obviously knows Davis a hell of a lot better than any of us lot, but having seen him perform his 13 games in a Wycombe shirt, it would be hard to justify a 6-figure sum for the man.

Still whatever lies in store for the Blues, one thing is for sure. The manager will always have "his boys" - the useless goons who will guarantee to depress week after week. Hang about I can hear one now.....

- "Oi Gaffer, can I wash the training kit tonight???"

The Meninblack!

So-called 'FA-approved' referee Frazer Stretton's mind-boggling decision to call off the first Peterborough game showed above all just what total power referees still have in the increasingly commercial world of football. Easily taken in by the theatricals of most members of the visiting side, it is an indictment on Stretton's experience of the game at a higher level that he didn't realise what thespianism was going on before his eyes. In ignoring such blatant sportsmanship though, you are exposing yourself to the 'cry wolf' syndrome in future games, where the condition of the pitch genuinely does deteriorate over the course of the game, and where it does actually become dangerous to play on.

As numerous luminaries involved with the match were quick to point out (Barry Fry included), the playing surface actually improved as the game went on. When proceedings were called to a halt, I thought initially it was for the fog, which had certainly crept in a bit further since the first half, but as the linesman's flag could clearly be seen from the back of the woodlands stand, it gradually dawned on us that Mr. Stretton had fallen prey to some pretty obvious Posh gamesmanship. Even at half-time (with the score still 2-0), I could have forgiven an abandonment of the fixture, although this would have exposed the Walsall and Bradford games for the farces that they were, but as has been said by many, all the 'injured' Peterborough players eventually got up and carried on with their game (all of which occurred in the second half - strange that), so to stop it with only 27 minutes remaining seems - well, put it this way, the phrase I'm looking for rhymes with 'clucking hazy'.

It is disappointing in this day and age of advanced technological breakthroughs, that a referee (or whoever should arbitrate on these matters) has no scientific means of judging whether a playing surface is fit to play on or not. I've no idea what it would look like, but I'm sure somebody could come up with a tool/gadget to measure just how treacherous a pitch really is. Likewise, rules could be brought in stating something along the lines of: "If the air temperature drops by three degrees celcius or more during the course of the game, the referee shall have the right to abandon the fixture as he sees fit." That way, everybody would know where they stand before and during the match, assuming each club has a thermometer somewhere outside for all to see.

Of course, if every senior ground in the country was compelled to install

undersoil heating, this whole issue would: (a) not come into debate at all, (b) make a lot of MDs of undersoil heating installation companies very happy indeed, and (c) financially cripple a lot of smaller clubs currently operating on a shoestring. I doubt if the sales rep from Frostaway plc has had much luck at Bournemouth recently.

So in the absence of undersoil heating, there is one very easy way of deciding whether or not a match should go ahead or not. You have involved with each match a referee (allegedly, 'in charge' of proceedings) and two managers (representing the teams taking part). A simple two thirds majority decision between these three will ensure that most parties are happy. Even if the referee declares the surface unfit to play on, this could be overruled by the two managers jointly (having presumably discussed it with their players first), and you would then avoid the fatuous scenario witnessed at Coventry when they first tried to play Woking. Both managers and their players were up for it, but the referee gave a late "sorry chaps!", and in so doing pissed off a large number of Woking fans who had trekked all the way up to the Midlands supposedly to watch a game of football. Contrast this to the Peterborough game, where at 10:30 *neither* manager wanted the game to go ahead, but were overruled by the ultimately incompetant referee. Under the proposed suggestion both of these senseless, not to mention costly decisions would have been avoided.

Which brings us to another point - who exactly are referees accountable to? Everyone (including Mr. Fry himself) admitted that the man in black had cocked up in abandoning the game when he did, but the repercussions are more far-reaching than just the potential loss of three points. Effectively, Wycombe will have to stage an 'extra' home league game for this season (along with all the additional costs involved), and because the match went on longer than half-time, normal pay-on-the-day punters qualify for no refund. As a goodwill gesture by the club, it would be nice to receive a free programme, or a complimentary 50/50 draw ticket, or some other measure of appreciation from the club, but no - this is *business* we're talking here and making profit is all that seems to matter. I guess if you're a season ticket holder, then no complaints, but Wycombe should, in all honesty, be able to sue the referee, or failing that, the F.A. for gross incompetance of staff. That way, the club should at least avoid being out-of-pocket for the abandoned game, which is the most important thing for a match which technically never took place.

Failing these measures, I am wholeheartedly in favour of adopting the measures taken by the Spanish FA (as well as some other European leagues, I would imagine), namely playing out the remaining time left of an abandoned

match behind closed doors. OK - so the fun for the spectator is removed (unless you can negotiate a cunning viewing point from the woods behind the new stand), but the clubs involved have minimal additional expense - basically the cost of paying for Peterborough's travel to Wycombe - plus it is ten times fairer than starting the whole match again. Well, we would say that as the Blues were trouncing Posh when it got stopped, but it stands to reason to carry on where you left off - can you imagine at Wimbledon if they restarted every tennis match that got rained off midway through, or if they reset each cricket innings affected by bad light? 'A funny old game' is most certainly still is.

KEITH RYAN SIGNS HIS POLICE STATEMENT AFTER THAT CLUB EDEN INCIDENT



Here's Johnny! a few words with the boss

Sadly, due to the pressures of Christmas, this small selection of questions to our relatively new manager just failed by a chickens whisker to make the last issue of TAF. Since that time we've had good days, bad days, and no luck days, but one thing is constant, and that is Wycombe's new desire to try and play some constructive footy - which they often succeed in too. For that alone we pay homage to John Gregory, and publish this mini-encounter.

Can you give us a brief synopsis of your playing career?

599 league appearances, a few clubs and a few goals.

What was the highlight of this career?

Representing my country ENGLAND.

What experiences did you gain in your first managerial position at Portsmouth?

Don't take the first job that you're offered - also make sure that you've learned your trade first.

You were a coach at Villa, how does this compare to being the big cheese here at Wycombe?

The managers job is much more enjoyable, although it's extremely time consuming. But I still like to coach, so I find it possible to combine the two.

A lot of teams seem to be getting in overseas players are you up for this?

I'd consider it yes ... put it into practice? Probably not!

Are you the sort of manager who chuck's teapots and chips around on the bus after a shoddy display?

No ... I don't get too excited when we win, likewise I don't get too ill tempered when we are 'shoddy'.

Do you see a lot of untapped potential in the Wycombe squad?

No (Whoops, but bear in mind this was before his new signing's -ed)

What is your knowledge of lower league and local footy?

Getting broader by the day.

Has anything surprised or disappointed you in your short time so far at Wycombe?

The biggest disappointment has been, without doubt, the results in my first month in charge. The biggest surprise has been Neil Davis remaining goalless!

The Gregory record at Wycombe (excl. AWS)

Up to and including Preston away: **20 games**

Won - Eight

Drawn - Three

Lost - Nine

